

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Signal Technology Corporation

Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex)

#### Signal Technology Simplifies And Streamlines Assembly

##### Client Profile:

Signal Technology - California offers a wide range of microwave components and integrated assemblies for commercial, defense, and space applications. With over 30 years of experience in designing, developing, and manufacturing, the company is recognized as a global leader in the RF microwave industry. Located in Sunnyvale, California, the company employs 120 people.

##### Situation:

For two years, Signal Technology attempted to implement lean manufacturing practices with little success. The company needed to simplify and streamline assembly to accommodate its low-volume, high-variation products. Finally, Signal Technology asked the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

##### Solution:

Manex initially led Signal Technology's management team through a value stream mapping session to evaluate the state of the company's current operations and, more importantly, to create a roadmap for future lean improvements. Based on the results, the team decided that Signal Technology would tackle its Isolator and Circulator assembly area first.

Manex led a five-day cellular/flow kaizen event that focused on the work procedures of nine individuals in the Isolator and Circulator cell. Manex's process improvements involved major revisions to the existing work area and production system. As part of the improvement process, Manex introduced cell employees to lean manufacturing concepts and instructed them in phases throughout the implementation. Manex also laid out a new cell to accommodate improvements in cycle time, work-in-process inventory, and workflow balance based on takt time. While creating the new cell layout, Manex moved the workstations into a more compact, U-shaped arrangement, which streamlined production by involving workers in each process of product assembly.

##### Results:

Improved cycle time by 90 percent.

Reduced work-in-process inventory by 70 percent.

Reduced required floor space by 42 percent.

Created a new culture of employee motivation, involvement, and team empowerment.

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Implementing daily continuous improvements through employee involvement.

**Testimonial:**

“The workers on the Isolator/Circulator line had been in a batch process mode for 20 years. With help from the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence, changing from batch processing to pull processing and establishing a work cell represents a dramatic change in the way we do business.”

Jim Geisick, Materials Manager